

MAYOR'S COLUMN**CREATING A SUSTAINABLE BLOOMINGTON****LEADING BY EXAMPLE**

By Mayor Gene Winstead

THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON has always strived to be a leader in environmental consciousness, energy conservation and sustainable objectives. Bloomington's early leaders did a lot to guard our valuable resources, such as protecting the marshes along Nine Mile Creek and in the Minnesota River Valley and setting aside one third of the city for open space. However, there is still much that can be done, using new technology and resident input to guide the way.

Open spaces

Early efforts preserved one third of the community as parks and open space, protecting important rivers, bluffs, lakes, ponds and wetlands from development.

Walking and biking trails have played a vital role in connecting businesses and residential areas to our open spaces and making commuting more enjoyable. As Bloomington develops and changes, our trails will become even more valuable to residents, ultimately making the city a healthier, more desirable place to live, work and visit. The City is working to improve the trail system. *See article below.*

**Mixed-use development**

A sustainable future is not only about green spaces, but developed spaces. Creating more density in already developed areas protects open spaces from development. Research shows that the most sustainable form of living is a mixture of land uses that allows people to live, work and play at a density that best supports public transit, particularly electrically powered rail transit.

Striving to be less energy dependent, the City has provided leadership through strategic planning, land use and financial capability, and by increasing development in proximity to major transportation facilities for the past few decades.

The idea of concentrating development on land close to freeways is not new. It was proposed by early Bloomington leaders in the 1960s, who understood that if trips to these areas arrived and departed via freeways and arterial streets, residential neighborhoods farther from the freeways would be protected from traffic.

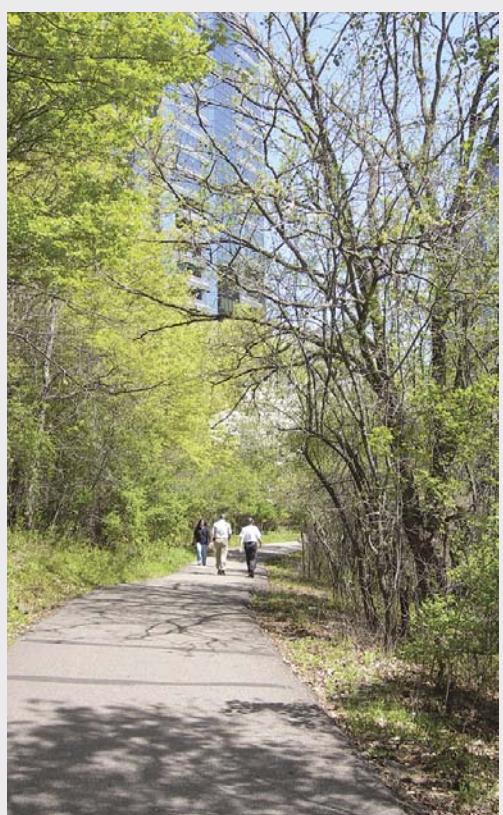
Sustainable building

The American Institute of Architects recently surveyed U.S. cities with populations greater than 50,000 about their green building programs and incentives. The survey, titled "Local Leaders in Sustainability: A Study of

Green Building Programs in our Nation's Communities," recognized the City of Bloomington as one of three Minnesota cities with a notable sustainability initiative.

Sustainable buildings are scored by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council. Bloomington has a number of LEED-certified buildings, including Quality Bicycle Products and Reflections, the two, 17-story residential towers at Bloomington Central Station. United Properties' 8200 Norman Center Drive tower, currently under construction, is expected to be LEED-certified when completed. Ryan Companies' Marketpointe II is applying for LEED certification. In addition, some newer City facilities have been built with sustainability in mind. One example is Bloomington's Civic Plaza, which has low water flow restroom fixtures; a computerized energy management system; exterior light control and building materials that were manufactured within 500 miles of the site.

By making use of new technology, incorporating mixed-use development and sustainable building techniques, Bloomington is being a good steward of its resources and setting an example for other cities to follow.

**TRAIL SYSTEM NEARS COMPLETION****WALKWAYS PROVIDE GREATER ACCESS FOR PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS**

A NEW, IMPROVED pedestrian and bike trail along East Bush Lake Road from 106th to 84th Street provides greater access for pedestrians and cyclists in the area.

The City used existing trails in the Hyland Lake Park Reserve and constructed new trails with the goal of providing a continuous walkway/bikeway system from 106th to 84th Street separated from traffic on East Bush Lake Road. To accommodate multiple users traveling in both directions, the trail was widened to

10 feet in most sections and an underpass was constructed north of 86th Street. Construction of the final segment, from the Forest Glen Trail leading to the Chalet intersection, is anticipated to be completed by summer 2008. Upon completion, the walkway/bikeway will provide non-motorized access between the various residential and office developments in the area to Hyland Lake Park Reserve, Bush Lake Beach, Richardson Nature Preserve, Forest Glen Trail and Lake Normandale. The trail segments



between 105th Street and the Forest Glen Trail area are now open for use.

For more information, call Engineering at 952-563-4914 or 952-563-4865.

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Upon request, this information can be available in Braille, large print, audio tape and/or electronic format.